

NEW RIVER VALLEY REGIONAL COMMISSION
Minutes of the Commission Meeting
held on
January 16, 2025
6:00 p.m.— Pulaski County Innovation Center, Fairlawn

I. CALL TO ORDER

Mr. Johnson, Chair, called the meeting to order.

PRESENT: Mr. H. Johnson, Town of Christiansburg, Chair; Mr. L. Law, Giles County, Treasurer; Ms. A. Covey, New River Community College, Vice-Chair; Ms. S. Anderson, Town of Blacksburg; Mr. L. Clevinger, Town of Pulaski; Ms. A. Davis, Town of Pearisburg; Mr. A. Grafsky, Montgomery County; Ms. T. Hockett, Town of Christiansburg; Mr. D. Horton, City of Radford; Mr. B. Jaunarena, Pulaski County; Dr. A. Joyner, Radford University; Mr. J. Martin, City of Radford; Mr. P. Martin, Giles County; Mr. M. Maslaney, Floyd County; Mx. E. Shawish, Town of Blacksburg Mr. K. Smith, Virginia Tech Foundation and Mr. T. Spangler, Town of Narrows

ABSENT: Ms. L. DeVito Kuchenbuch, Floyd County; Mr. W. Griffin, Town of Floyd; Mr. R. Jones, Town of Rich Creek; Mr. R. Lawson, Town of Pembroke; Mr. R. McCoy, Giles County; Ms. L. Morris, Virginia Tech; Mr. J. Reeves, Pulaski County; vacant, Town of Pulaski; vacant, Town of Dublin and Mr. B. Wheeler, Montgomery County.

Staff Attendees: Kevin Byrd, Chris Owens, Julie Phillips, and Christy Straight

II. CONSENT AGENDA

A. Approval of Minutes for November

Mr. Johnson called for approval of the consent agenda item if there were no questions or changes.

Motion: Mr. Horton moved for the approval of the minutes. Mr. Maslaney seconded the motion.

Action: Motion carried.

B. Approval of Treasurer's Reports for November

Mr. Johnson called for approval of the consent agenda item if there were no questions or changes.

Motion: Mr. Spangler moved for approval of the Treasurer's Reports. Ms. Anderson seconded the motion.

Action: Motion carried.

III. COMMONWEALTH INTERGOVERNMENTAL REVIEW PROCESS

A. Projects (Signed-off by the staff)

None

B. Regular Project Review

1. New River Valley Community Services Vehicle Purchase

IV. PUBLIC ADDRESS

None

V. CHAIR'S REPORT

None

VI. EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Mr. Byrd provided a summary report in the Regional Commission agenda packet. The NRV Recovery Ecosystem is working with the Community Foundation of the NRV to establish a Support Fund. The Support Fund program will allow all four counties and the city to allocate funds to the Foundation that could then be drawn down for citizens going through recovery programs with a specific urgent need. A Peer Coalition kick-off event was held at Edwards Hall on the campus of New River Community College. The Peer Coalition will serve to support people with a history of substance use in a wide variety of ways. The New River Health District has a new mobile unit that was recently wrapped with graphics and is out in the region to provide numerous services that are offered through on-site clinics.

The Montgomery County VATI 2021 project for Eastern Montgomery County is completing rail road crossings this month that have delayed the project. Once those are finished, the 2021 project will closeout, likely in February. The VATI 2022 project for Montgomery/Bland is in the build-out phase with consistent construction underway. Pulaski County's project will be highlighted at the board meeting this month with representatives from All Points Broadband.

The work of many companies in the Virginia AM2 Tech Hub was featured in the recent issue of Virginia Economic Review, which is the print publication of the Virginia Economic Development Partnership.

The I-81 Corridor Committee met on December 13th to review progress of the Corridor Improvement Program and receive a presentation on the NRV Passenger Rail project. Key information from this meeting included the announcement of an update to the Corridor Improvement Program that will take place over the next year since the initial plan was developed in 2018.

The Virginia Passenger Rail Authority (VPRA) will hold a groundbreaking event for the New River Valley project in Cambria on March 20th at 1:00pm. Invitations will go to board members and all local, state, and federal elected officials. The Station Authority meets on 1/16 and will discuss participation agreement structure and receive an update from VPRA. Gubernatorial candidate Abigail Spanberger will be in town and receive a rail briefing on January 18th.

Friends of Southwest Virginia (SWVA) received an Appalachian Regional Commission grant to support Hurricane Helene impacts to outdoor recreation assets. The PDC directors in southwest Virginia met with staff from Friends of SWVA to discuss the project funding. The group determined the best use is to develop a debris removal plan for each community in the flood impacted areas. A RFP will be issued for drone services to capture images of all the debris. Once footage is secured, the level of debris will be evaluated to determine what will require special equipment and

which areas can be addressed with volunteer labor. The New River will be the focal point for this region.

The Town of Dublin officially joined the Regional Commission effective January 1, 2025! This marks 100% of local governments in the region being members of the organization.

The Regional Commission closed on the office building purchase in Christiansburg on 12/13. Employees of the Commission toured the building on 12/19. The architecture/engineering team will provide 65% design drawings later in January.

With the new year there are several organizational meetings taking place. Mr. Byrd facilitated a visioning session with the Radford City Council and their Interim City Manager on 1/8 and will be facilitating the Floyd County Board of Supervisors retreat. Please reach out if the Regional Commission can be of assistance facilitating meetings.

VII. REVIEW OF MUTUAL CONCERNS AND COMMISSIONERS' REPORTS

Ms. Covey reported New River Community College has a new president, Dr. Robert Brandon.

Mr. Graftsky reported April DeMotts is the Chair and Steve Fijalkowski is the Vice-Chair of the Montgomery County Board of Supervisors.

Mr. Horton shared several items from the East Main Revitalization Plan are being implemented, such as sidewalk, lighting, and landscape upgrades. The Polar Plunge to benefit SWVA Special Olympics will be held March 1st in Bisset Park.

Mx. Shawish reported they presented at the Virginia Association of Biological Farmers representing Glade Road Growing.

Dr. Joyner reported that Radford University had a 7% increase in retention for the spring semester compared to last year. There are several Highlander Days planned in February and March for prospective students. Nicole Hair was recently hired as the Director of Economic Development and Community Engagement. Radford University received final approval from the Pearson Center to open their Pearson Testing Center.

Ms. Hockett reported the former Main Street Baptist Church building in downtown Christiansburg will be reused as a school.

VIII. OLD BUSINESS

None

IX. NEW BUSINESS

- A. Pulaski County Broadband Project Overview
Tom Innes with All Points Broadband, the Internet Service Provider (ISP) delivering fiber to the premise for Pulaski County's broadband deployment project, presented a project background,

work completed to date, and the project completion schedule. The project will deliver 7,872 serviceable units across the county in areas that are un-served or under-served by incumbent internet providers. The project is funded by a Virginia Telecommunication Initiative (VATI) grant award from 2022 in the amount of \$29,122,000.00 to the New River Valley Regional Commission, and matching funds of \$24,103,057.19 from All Points Broadband and \$2,000,000 from Pulaski County for a total project of \$55,225,057.19.

B. Set FY26 Ride Solutions Program Overview and Operating Grant Resolution

Ms. Straight explained RIDE Solutions NRV serves the region with transportation demand management services for commuters and employers and is part of a larger brand serving central and southwest Virginia. Partners in this brand include the Roanoke Valley-Alleghany Regional Commission, Central Virginia Planning District Commission, and West Piedmont Planning District Commission. The Department of Rail and Public Transportation (DRPT) provides operating funding to commuter assistance programs across Virginia. The agency provides funding at an 80% match of project costs, with local investment at 20% of costs.

Motion: Mr. Horton moved to approve the FY26 Ride Solutions and Operating Grant Application to DRPT. Ms. Hockett seconded the motion.

Action: Motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Johnson called to adjourn the meeting at 7:01 pm.

H. Johnson, Chair
New River Valley Regional Commission